



Legislation Text

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SEGRI Special Area Plan (B)

The Southeast Gainesville Renaissance Initiative (SEGRI) Master Plan is a conceptual planning tool that outlines the vision and goals for new development in the SEGRI study area. The SEGRI Master Plan process began in March 2007, with a kickoff meeting hosted by consulting firm Wilson-Miller. Over the next several months, Wilson-Miller worked closely with local residents, City staff, CRA staff, and other stakeholders in order to identify a unified vision for future development in southeast Gainesville. Community participation meetings were held on April 18, 2007, June 23, 2007, July 11, 2007 and August 30, 2007, and through this process stakeholders identified challenges, strengths, and goals for the SEGRI area. Stakeholders also identified both the types of uses and the quality of design desired within the SEGRI area.

After receiving excellent feedback from the community, six redevelopment Focus Sites were selected to undergo a full planning analysis. These sites were selected based on their high visibility within the study area, their potential to accommodate redevelopment (sites that are vacant or underutilized), and their ability to spur additional reinvestment and redevelopment throughout the remainder of the SEGRI study area. Each Focus Site received a site planning analysis where consultants provided examples of how the stakeholder's desired uses, architectural standards, and urban design elements could potentially be realized. These conceptual site plans illustrate how new development and infill redevelopment in southeast Gainesville can provide needed amenities to the community while also achieving a high quality of design that is complimentary of and beneficial to the existing neighborhoods. Findings were presented to the City Commission on September 10, 2007, concluding the SEGRI visioning and master planning process.

Although the Master Plan document is complete, there are still significant challenges in realizing and implementing the SEGRI vision. Of the six redevelopment Focus Sites identified in the study, only one property, the former Kennedy Homes site, is currently owned by the City. There is a degree of uncertainty regarding how and when the remaining privately-owned study sites might be developed. The SEGRI Master Plan is not a binding regulatory document, and therefore the five privately-owned Focus Sites (along with any other privately-owned lands in the SEGRI study area) may currently be developed in a manner that is permissible under the City of Gainesville Land Development Code, but which is inconsistent with the SEGRI vision. Recognizing this issue, the CRA and the City Commission requested staff to move forward with creating a zoning overlay/Special Area Plan (SAP) that could facilitate the type of development, quality of design, and mix of uses discussed in the SEGRI Master Plan. The Special Area Plan will function as an additional set of standards (on top of the underlying zoning), and will serve as a regulatory tool to implement the SEGRI vision. The SAP will transition the SEGRI vision from a conceptual plan into an implementation tool that will require a high quality of development throughout southeast Gainesville.

Staff worked closely with Wilson-Miller to prepare the SEGRI SAP. In keeping with the precedent established during the Master Plan process, public participation has been an important component in crafting the Special Area Plan. Over the past months, Wilson-Miller received much input from neighborhood leaders, local residents, CRA staff, and City officials. Through a series of public meetings, the proposed SAP has received input and comment from the Eastside Redevelopment Advisory Board, from southeast Gainesville neighborhood leaders, and from the general public.

Based on stakeholder feedback, Wilson-Miller has compiled the SAP regulations that will serve to implement the SEGRI vision. It is important to note the differences between the SEGRI Master Plan and the proposed SAP. The SEGRI Master Plan is a conceptual document that outlines a general vision for the area by providing specific examples of how this vision might be realized through specific uses, site layout, and architecture at six properties. The SAP cannot mandate this level of detail (i.e. exact uses and precise site layout) on a parcel-by-parcel basis. Rather, the SAP consists of a set of standards to ensure a high quality appearance for new development, to promote pedestrian-friendly design, and to protect/enhance the existing residential neighborhoods. The SAP enforces the SEGRI vision by encouraging development that relates well to adjoining public streets, open spaces, and neighborhoods. It also provides for development and redevelopment that contains a compatible mix of residential and non-residential uses within close proximity to one another. The goal of the SAP is to implement the high-quality standards identified by SEGRI, while also allowing flexibility, individuality and creativity for projects within southeast Gainesville.

The proposed SAP includes regulations related to urban design, site and building orientation, architectural standards, and general prohibited uses. Development standards are divided into three major categories: Residential, Non-Residential and Mixed-Use, and Bulk Standards. Responding to public input demanding a variety of housing options and densities, the SEGRI SAP residential uses encourage detached single-family, attached single-family and multi-family housing. Residential development standards cover issues such as setbacks, garage placement, front porches, and sidewalk requirements. For attached single-family and multi-family housing, the SEGRI SAP also provides standards related to elements such as architecture, massing and articulation, building orientation, building height, parking, and façade treatments.

The SAP also encourages the types of non-residential uses and qualities desired by SEGRI stakeholders. Non-Residential and Mixed-Use standards relate to site and building design elements such as architecture, setbacks, transparency, ground floor height, and use orientation. Parking areas are also addressed, as are streets and blocks. The SAP contains standards relating to sidewalks, cross-access, lighting, landscaping, street trees, transit stop connection, bicycle spaces, and stormwater facilities. In addition to all other standards, the SAP includes support for environmentally sustainable building practices, and for Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design techniques.

The proposed SEGRI Special Area Plan will provide a regulatory toolset that will oblige development within the study area to adhere to the guiding principles behind SEGRI. It is envisioned that resulting development will be high quality, sensitive to the existing neighborhoods, oriented to the human scale, and engaged with the public realm. However, while implementing the SEGRI vision is important; particular care has been taken to prevent regulations from becoming too complex or confusing. The goal of the SEGRI process is not to hinder redevelopment in the study area, but rather to enhance it. To this end, the proposed SAP is also linked to existing overlays that currently operate within the SEGRI area. The overall goal is to present standards and regulations in a cohesive, uncomplicated, straightforward manner.

Should the City Commission accept the proposed SEGRI Special Area Plan created by Wilson-Miller, staff will move forward with incorporating the document into the City's Land Development Code. CRA staff will work with staff from the City Planning and City Attorney offices in order to finalize the document for adoption into the LDC. It is anticipated that the adoption process, which will involve multiple public hearings, will take approximately six months.

None at this time. The CRA funded the SEGRI special area overlay at a cost not to exceed \$20,000, budgeted in Account No. 621-790-W920-5520.

The City Commission: 1) Hear presentation from Wilson-Miller and provide input as necessary; 2) Accept the proposed SEGRI Special Area Plan; and 3) Direct staff to finalize the proposed SAP and initiate the process for the SAP's adoption into the City of Gainesville Land Development Code.